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The Imperative of Restructuring and Conflict Management in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examines the Nigerian State and the imperative of restructuring as conflict management strategy towards peace-building. The study adopts an expository and descriptive analytical framework. It traces the persistent conflicts and agitations to the dysfunctional structure of the Federal system and argues that historically, Nigeria is fraught with conflicts, some of them life threatening, others minor and pedestrian. It maintains that the imperative of restructuring is a sine-quo-non to sustainable conflict management and peace-building that will develop constructive relationships across ethnic and national boundaries to resolve injustice and transform structural conditions that generates deadly conflict. It revealed that the challenge facing the Nigerian nation is how to make conflicts constructive rather than destructive, marginal rather than fundamental, peripheral rather than pivotal. The study suggests that the Nigerian State needs attitudinal restructuring and systemic framework that will guarantee economic and political freedom of the minorities and the marginalized within the sovereign State and built a pluralist democratic State where the rights of all citizens are respected. It also seek to blend power with principle and reconcile authority with freedom, and put a robust peace infrastructure in place to play a preventive and mitigating role.

Keywords: Restructuring, federal character principle, conflict management, peace-building

Introduction

In recent time, “restructuring” has dominated public discourse across Nigeria. Interest groups that have not staged local or regional assemblies on the subject are preparing to do so, impelled by circumstances they can no longer ignore or control. If the declaration by Nigerian president Mohammadu Buhari that “the unity of Nigeria is not negotiable” once passed as measure of sincere commitment to the Nigerian project, then there is the need to evolve a sustainable strategy as a response to the demand for a peaceful resolution of the national questions. At the heart of that declaration is the assumption that “the unity of Nigeria” already exists and that those seeking to discuss it are at bottom seeking to countermand, if not destroy it. Yet, one cannot recall a time since independence when Nigeria was more divided than it is today, when national consensus was more tenuous, when mutual bathing across the ethnic

and religious divides was more pervasive. In what respect is “the unity of Nigeria” not negotiable? If the unity already exists, or it is actually sure, it can still be negotiated to reinforce it and to establish for her citizens “a more perfect union”. In whatever case, “the unity of Nigeria” must mean much more than unity for the sake of unity. So, what should be its purpose? What should it consist of? These, surely, are legitimate issues for discussion and debate, especially when the very concept of unity has for all practical purposes been turned into uniformity. Jibrin (2017) argued that almost on a daily basis, there are stringent demands that we must restructure Nigeria. The tone of the argument is that if Nigeria does not restructure, the State runs the risk of complete collapse. What is surprising in the demands is that there is little content on what will change. Only very few people are talking about what the restructured Nigeria would look like.

Nigeria seems to be a federation in name only following the perceived structural imbalance and economic disequilibrium. This development has generated different shades of opinion among individuals and ethnic nationalities within the polity. According to Yakasai (2018) restructuring, as many other problematic concepts, was conceived by Afenifere, an offshoot of Action Group, to destabilize the country. “It is upon those who are agitating for restructuring to tell Nigerians the real meaning of restructuring. For example, how will Nigeria look like after restructuring? What is your fate? “If restructuring means constitutional amendments, there is laid down procedure for constitutional amendment. Yakasai maintained that the ongoing agitation on restructuring is a selfish agenda initiated by the Yoruba people and blindly promoted by uninformed Igbos across the country (<https://www.vanguardngr.com>).

Today, few ethnic groups are well placed by their political dominance to impose its policy preferences on other nationalities in the nation-state and dominate it in many other respects. This is contrary to the cardinal principles of federalism that no unit should assume such dominance over the rest. Various territories in Nigeria parceled and partitioned into States are unviable and not a true representation of a perfect union. The creation of six geo-political zones seeks to evade the problem by recreating it in similar scale. How these can constitute the building blocks for a more perfect union beats our imagination. Whether expressed as a quest for “resource control” or “true federalism” or “fiscal federalism” or “Sovereign national conference” or “national conference”, the demand for restructuring has attained a momentum that cannot be arrested and a silence that can no longer be ignored. Those who claim that they do not understand what it is all about or that it is a matter for the national assembly to resolve, are being disingenuous. And they risk consigning themselves in irrelevance in the task of re-shaping Nigeria, probably the most urgent task of our time.

Chief Anthony Enahoro, one of the founders of Modern Nigeria and leader of the Movement for National Reformation, reviewed the political situation and

its implication for the country's future. The distinguished statesman and patriot concluded that Nigeria had only three options in the long run:

1. Continue headlong on its present course and pray that God rescue it from the consequences of its folly.
2. Take concrete steps to restructure the federation, granting a substantial measure of internal self-government to the nationalities and groups of nationalities, and return to "Collective self-Government".
3. The nationalities and groups of nationalities disband the federation and go their separate ways (Vanguard, May 25, 1995).

In spite of the policies aimed at cohering the different nationalities, the centre is still facing growing challenges like agitation for resource control, the issue of minority marginalization and disequilibrium in the appropriation of the national wealth. These have culminated into the emergence of ethnic militia groups against the State like Boko Haram insurgents, Niger Delta militants, indigenous people of Biafra (now proscribed and declared as a terrorist group) and incipient separatist groups, armed bands of lawless cattle herdsman. The nation-state needs restructuring that will guarantee economic and political freedom of the minorities and the marginalized within the sovereign State.

Theoretical Framework

The Structural-Functionalism theory is adopted as the underpinning theoretical framework to explicate the fundamental thrust of this study. The Functionalist or Structural Functionalist ideology as postulated by Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) sees society as an organism structured into many parts, each with its own function. Structural-Functionalism is a sociological theory that originally attempted to explain social institutions as collective means to meet individual biological needs (originally just functionalism). Later it came to focus on the ways social institutions meet social needs (structural-functionalism).

Durkheim was concerned with the question of how societies maintain internal stability and survive over time. He sought to explain social cohesion and stability through the concept of solidarity. In more "primitive" societies it was mechanical solidarity, everyone performing similar tasks that held society together. Durkheim proposed that such societies tend to be segmentary, being composed of equivalent parts that are held together by shared values, common symbols, or systems of exchanges. In modern, complex societies members perform very different tasks, resulting in a strong interdependence between individuals. Based on the metaphor of an organism in which many parts function together to sustain the whole, Durkheim argued that modern complex societies are held together by organic solidarity (think interdependent organs).

Similarly, Talcott Parsons, who introduced the idea that there are stable structural categories that make up the interdependent systems of a society and functioned to maintain society. He argued that this homeostasis is the critical characteristic of societies. Parsons supported individual integration into social structures, meaning that individuals should find how they fit into the different

aspects of society on their own, rather than being assigned roles. Parsons saw social systems as "a plurality of individual actors interacting with each other in a situation which has at least a physical or environmental aspect, actors who are motivated in terms of a tendency to the "optimization of gratification" and whose relation to their situations, including each other, is defined and mediated in terms of a system of culturally structured and shared symbols. The foundation of Parsons' social system is the status-role complex, which consists of structural elements or positions that individuals hold in a system. These positions are referred to as statuses and are occupied by individuals who must carry out the roles in order to maintain the order of the system. Therefore, within this social system individuals perform certain roles to fulfill the system's functions; these roles are a function of their statuses. As society progresses there are new roles and statuses that occur, allowing individuals to express their unique personalities resulting in individualism (<https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?>).

According to Poroma (2019) Functionalism entails that the society should meet certain individual and group needs and both the state actors and non-state actors should be alive to their statutory responsibilities. Therefore, for a system to be functional, Talcott Parson opines that the system must imbibe the following functional imperatives; adaptation, goal attainment, pattern maintenance and integration. In other words, the system need to adapt to the environment, secondly, the institutions must achieve collective goals, thirdly, the system must maintain control including tension in the polity and fourthly, it must integrate the diverse actions of members of the society.

Therefore, the relevance of this theory in explaining the national question of restructuring in the Nigerian polity cannot be overemphasized. It is necessary to maintain a state of equilibrium within the system for the purpose of controlling the rising tension and agitations and integrating the heterogeneous populations of the nation-state. The complex nature of the Nigerian state can only be sustained through organic solidarity as opined by Dukheim, therefore restructuring of the system will enhance interdependence and system maintenance.

The Nigerian State and the Imperative of Restructuring

There have been several agitations and clamour for fair representation of the different nationalities in national issues since independence. It was in response to this that State creation and federal character principle was enshrined as a policy thrust of the Nigerian State. Other measures include regular and routine changes in the revenue allocation formula, the establishment of the NYSC (National Youth Service Corps), federal takeover of different agencies, schools, hospitals and Universities common services agencies like the JAMB (Joint Admission Matriculation Board) the NUC (National Universities Commissions) and so on (Abubakar, 2006). These bold attempts at maintaining a federal posture and outlook have not always been successful in accomplishing the desired goals. *Jibrin (2017) maintains that* restructuring is extremely difficult

because it is difficult to imagine any of the existing 36 States surrendering its existence to a new structure to which it would hand over its authority. The alternative of retaining existing States and simply super-imposing a six zonal structure on them is also unrealistic because it would mean multiplying political structures and financial costs at a time in which resources are very scarce.

However, drawing from the experiences of Northern and Southern Sudan, and then Ethiopia and Eritrea, there is the necessity for the Nigeria-State to restructure. The Sudanese were lumped together as one nation by the executive fiat of a colonial master. Notwithstanding, the cultural and the religious differences as well as diversities of the people, they were compelled to hold together; and the result has been decades of killing and maiming, carnage and death. Akinrinade (2006) raised issues that are germane to our search for common grounds in conflict management and peace building. Like in Czechoslovakia, agitations by Europeans for freedom and independence are described as self-determination; all it takes is a disciplined approach through a referendum, to decide which way to go. But in Africa, such agitations are described as secession, rebellion or separatist movement, and they always graduate into shooting, war and needless bloodletting. There is the need to handle this fragile situation with caution and great circumspection as well as to find a common ground that will enable Nigerians discuss measures toward ending this persistence agitations and needless conflict. As Akinrinade (2006) maintains that the goal is to restructure in a manner that allows the component parts to live in peace and understanding.

The issue of restructuring in recent time has come to the main burner of national discuss at different fora considering the challenges the nation-State is passing through. General Gbor APGA's Presidential candidate in 2019 elections unambiguously outlined in his mission statement entitled; MY COVENANT WITH NIGERIANS, the necessity of restructuring and maintained that the anachronistic federal system of government being practiced in Nigeria today has apparently marginalized more ethnic nationalities than intended by past military regimes which actually distorted real or fiscal federalism practiced in the country before the violent overthrow of the country's First Republic in 1966. It therefore becomes essential for Nigeria to restructure and return effectively to practice of true federalism, in which states or economic zones, as is being championed by the All Progressives Grand Alliance, APGA, should be in total control of natural resources in their domains (<https://www.enternigeria.com/2019/01/13>).

Similarly, Anakwenze (2019) believed that restructuring would help to solve the major challenges inhibiting the nation's growth and development and posited their strong believe in the restructuring and devolution of power in Nigeria believe in the respect for the constitution, rule of law, human rights and the federal character. As a system engulf with plethora of challenges, the fundamental question is what do we need to restructure? The identification of the fundamental areas that are generating agitations should form the basis of

discussion. However, an attempt was made in 2014, when Nigeria held a National Conference in which about 500 selected citizens, representing all parts of Nigeria, met for several months and debated the question of restructuring and reached agreement by 70 percent, majority voted on all that they agreed upon. However, certain areas were excluded from discussion, while the conferees could not agree on the issue of revenue distribution formula which led to a walk-out by the South-South delegates. In a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria with different shades of agitations and discontents, such a Conference should be devoid of ethno-centricism and discuss all fundamental issues plaguing the State objectively for the purpose of nation-building. And this witnessed the beginning of the failure of that conference.

The basic idea of federation is that various distinct parts of the country (especially a country comprising of different ethnic nations) should be made a federating unit (or State). Each State should have the constitutional power to manage its unique problems and concerns, to develop its own resources for its people to manage and make its contributions to the central or federal government. But since independence, our leading politicians and military leaders have gradually destroyed the structure and replace it with a structure in which the federal government is the controller of virtually all power and all resources as well as the power to develop all resources, and in which the States have no control over their resources and must depend on federal allocations for funds to survive. The federal government is overburdened with concentrated powers and responsibilities, while the States are seemingly impotent and dependent on the central government. The cumulative effect of all these is that Nigeria and Nigerians have become horribly poor, that most public facilities (roads, electricity, water installations, public administration, etc.) are not working or have turned moribund. It is against this backdrop that the necessity of restructuring becomes inevitable for the nation-State to make any meaningful progress in her socio-economic and political strive.

Restructuring as Conflict Management Strategy towards Peace-Building

Nigeria is no stranger to conflicts, before the advent of the colonial master, the conflicts were mainly tribal and geo-political jostling for relevance among the different ethnic groups that comprised the geographical area called Nigeria. The balance of power between the North and the South, and between the East and the West, was a factor which the colonial master exploited to their advantage. In 1946, Nigeria began to evolve a federal structure. A federal system is one in which the ordinary powers of sovereignty are distributed among bodies, each coordinate with the independent of others. In a federal set-up, there is devolution of powers between the different centres of government, usually the federal, the State and the Local governments. Often the essential factors are dispersion of legislative authority, the achievement of unity in diversity, and the pursuit of the goal of even development. Thus, federalism compels realism in power sharing, revenue allocation and even development. Put in other way, federalism is not just decentralization. It is a partnership of

individuals, groups and governments in the pursuit of justice, cooperative relationship and negotiation as a basic for power sharing.

According to Elazar (1982), contractual non-centralization, the structured dispersion of power among many centres whose legitimate authority is constitutionally guaranteed, is the principal characteristic of an argument for federal democracy. Decentralization implies hierarchy, a pyramid of governments with gradation of power flowing down from the top, but pyramids tight or loose, are the way of American government. From the beginning, the system was organized as a matrix, not a hierarchy, a non-centralized political system in which the powers were not allocated by levels but divided among different arenas federal, state and local.

Elazar (1982) further identified the three different brands of federalism:

1. **Classical Federalism:** One in which the federal government was to be the servant of the state. In matters of individual rights, the federal government deferred to the states, while in matters involving territorial expansion and promotion of a common market it took an active role on behalf of the states.
2. **Co-operative Federalism:** This is based on the concept of partnership, linking the states and the federal governments in joint endeavors to pursue common and shared goals. However, federal initiatives have to be justified to legitimate federal intervention in state and local affairs.
3. **Creative Federalism:** Defines a very visible role for the federal government, with federal intervention considered legitimate in itself and viewed as the choice way of mobilizing the country's resources to serve common needs.

What the plethora of definitions conveys, is that federalism is a mutually respecting and commonly beneficial relationship, based on voluntary and willingness to surrender powers of sovereignty by the component parts. A federal government guided by this mind-set, will therefore be more accommodating, more understanding more willing to negotiate, and far more ready to yield grounds in the interest of peace and good neighbourliness. The former US president, Bill Clinton recently offered Nigeria and Nigerian governments, an unsolicited advice that has enthralled and captivated the federal government. He cautioned Nigerians to realize that "change" is a process and not an event and that no one should expect that all the damage done over a generation can be undone in a year. Even more pointedly, he advised that real change demands perseverance and patience; it demands openness to honourable compromise and co-operation.

Conflicts arise when two or more individuals, groups, communities or nations pursue mutually exclusive or un-harmonious goals. Often times the underlying factors include scarcity of resources, clash of interests, incongruence of values standard and principles and a perception of being displaced by other parties in pursuit of desired goals. Conflicts can originate within the entity resulting in intra-personal, intra-group or intra-national conflicts or they could reflect incompatible actions between contrasting groups

or persons leading the interpersonal, intergroup or international conflicts. Depending on how they are handled, conflicts can serve a constructing role leading to a re-examination of basic assumptions and practices or in the alternative, to a disruption of life and general wellbeing of a people. The challenge for leaders and managers is how to make conflicts constructive rather than destructive, overt rather than covert, marginal rather than fundamental, peripheral rather than pivotal.

Maier (2001) in his thesis attempted to analyse in detail the divisive and centrifugal forces that continue to deepen our sense chauvinism as a nation-state:

1. **Militocracy and Rulership:** Before 1999, it was crystal clear that Nigeria's armed forces had been transformed from military in the conventional sense to an armed political party. The consequences for the military and the nation is that the hallowed and respected institution has become a factor in the geo-political maneuvers and conflicts that bedeviled the Nigerian Nation.
2. **Niger-Delta Region:** The Niger Delta has been described as the soft-under-belle of the Nigerian nation, "the heart of the Nigerian Economy". The only problem however, was that very much like the rest of the nation's economy, this economic heart of Nigeria "appeared to be in a state of Cardiac arrest", much of the agitations, restless conflicts and confrontation in present-day Nigeria, have their base in this region.
3. **Northern Islamic Fundamentalism:** Rightly, as it has been said that when ethnicity combines with power politics and religious extremism, the resultant impact is an inflammable cocktail that can blow up anytime. Radical preachers and sect like Maitatsine and Boko Haram, live in their trail unrelenting bloodshed, bombings, killing and maiming of innocent citizens of every faith and persuasion. This tinderbox has long been aflame.
4. **Northern Minority Elements:** Nigeria's North-central region with its ethnic political and religious complexity is yet another hotbed of crisis and controversy in Nigeria. The coloration of the conflicts in this region, seems primarily from contentions and disputes among minority ethnic groups for example, the Katafs, the Tivs and the junkus overland and access to political offices. Claims and counter-claims of indigeneship and non-indigeneship, strangers and settler elements, often come to the fore in this crisis.
5. **Yoruba Dissent and Resurgence:** Before the advent of the current democratic dispensation, the cry of marginalization was loudest in the West. The Military scuttled the fairest and freest election in Nigeria's recent history, and incarcerated the presumed winner, Chief M.K.O. Abiola of blessed memory. The nation's remorse led to the enthronement of Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo (rtd) as Nigerian President. This era birthed the emergence of angry young men like Gani Adams, leader of the OPC (O'dua people's Congress).

6. The Igbo of the south-East: In the days succeeding the attainment of national independence, Igbo's occupied a unique niche in the economic, social and political life of the nation. They produced the elite officer corps of the Nigerian Army and constituted the main bloc of Nigerian public servants. Having led an unsuccessful attempt at secession, the Igbo's have lost their position in Nigeria's political firmament.

Olite (2001, cited in Osisioma, 2004) attempted a summary of the sources of conflicts in the Nigerian polity:

- i. Land space and the resources available;
- ii. Disputed jurisdiction of certain traditional rulers and chiefs;
- iii. Creation of local government councils and the location of their headquarters;
- iv. Ethnic and individual/sectional competition over access to scarce political and economic resources;
- v. Micro and macro-social structures with variety of conflicting cultural interest, values and preferences;
- vi. Population growth and expansion tendencies to sustain ethnic-bound occupations;
- vii. Perception of disregard for cultural symbols and the pollution for cultural practices;
- viii. Politicization of religious pluralism and fanaticism of religious practitioners.

These are Nigeria's potential flashpoints that could ignite and inflame passions of the nation. It is painful that after hundred years of nationhood, Nigeria is still very much a nation in search of a common and united front. All the indices of measurement warn the Nigerian nation of her precarious position-failed states index, moils governance index, corruption index, misery index, Human development index and etc.

Today, the challenges are becoming daunting than ever. In the North-East the Boko Haram menace hangs like the sword of Damocles over the nation, in the North-Central the Fulani herdsmen are killing people almost every now then in local communities. In the North-West, the Shiite-Sunni face off still festers with the religious leader El-Zakzaky still in detention.

In the South-South the long and evolving list of militants emerges on a daily basis. From the age-old MOSOP (Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People) to the more recent MEND (Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta) and lately the NDA (Niger Delta Avengers) and the NDV (Niger Delta Volunteers), the same message resonates: the land is not at peace and the conflicts are escalating rather than abating.

In the South-East, the MASSOB (Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra) is fast giving way for IPOB (Indigenous people of Biafra). The Biafran movement has all the making of a serious case for independence, complete with flags national symbols, and all other paraphernalia of sovereignty. The

more conservative and more matured sectional and ethnic groups in Nigeria, represented by APC (Arewa People's Congress) in the North, the OPC (Oduduwa people's congress) and Afenifere in the South-West, and the Ohanize Ndigbo in the South-East are no more subdued in the sectional notes and themes they sound.

Perhaps, one can stop for a while and consider what great impact, an approach in this genre could have on the Nigerian conflicted environment, elsewhere in Kenya, following the tumultuous and bloody election in that country in 2007, the government took far reaching measures to formulate and implement a national policy on Peace-Building and conflict management. The vision was for "a peaceful secure and prosperous Kenya" and the mission was "to promote sustainable peace through a collaborative institutional framework between State and non-State actors and Kenya communities.

Giving these serious measures by a developing country in Africa, what should be the steps that Nigeria should take to find a common ground among our fielding peoples? Peace building can come inform of direct effort that focuses intentionally on the factors driving or mitigating conflict, in an attempt to reduce structural or direct violence. At this point, it would be most appropriate to commend the statesmanship and sagacity of the Yar'Adua administration in formulating the amnesty programme in 2007. Beyond that, President Yar'Adua sought to improve on the derivation component of the revenue allocation formula. He also attempted to ensure that a percentage of the oil revenue derived from an area was ploughed back in the development of that area. He further strengthened the NDDC (Niger Delta Development Commission) and even raised a Ministry of Niger Delta at the federal level.

Maier (2001) had highlighted the past injustice of Niger Delta in these words: "over the years, 634 million barrels of oil worth approximately \$30 billion had been pumped from Ogoni land alone through a network of ninety-six wells hooked up to five flow stations, in return the Ogoni's received much of the harm but few of the benefits of the oil industry have to offer. The oil companies brought pipelines, flow stations, gas flaring and oil spills, which combine with the deterioration of the soil, proved a poisonous cocktail for the Ogoni's livelihood, the seed of future conflict had been planted, and it was early a matter of time before they bore their explosive fruit". It seems that Europe was built out of the colonial exploitation of Africa in the 17th and 18th centuries; Modern America was built on the sweat and tears of slaves who were transported across the Atlantic in human and dehumanizing conditions. And modern Nigeria is built on the rape and abuse of the Niger Delta region of the South-South. Sequel to this, the Nigerian State at this point requires a system restructuring that will guarantee the people fair ownership and control of the resources of the land. This includes the oil blocs, the key appointments in the oil industry, and the policy making instruments.

Perhaps it would be wise to adopt a similar approach to the solution of the Boko Haram menace. However, it is understood that the case of Boko Haram is not the same with the militants in the Niger Delta, but finding a common

ground for peace demands that government learns over backwards in accommodating the diverse elements of our federal system. Perhaps, government could begin to consider some definite steps and actions.

The agitations for restructuring has become a burning issue in recent time in national discuss among politicians, academics and the civil society organizations. It was in line with this that a former vice President, Atiku Abubakar added his voice to the clamor. Citing the prevailing feelings of being short-changed, dominated, oppressed, threatened or even targeted for elimination among some ethnic groups in Nigeria. The frontline politician emphasized the inheritability of restructuring for Nigeria and maintained that the question is whether it will happen around a conference table in a direction influenced by us and whether we will be an equal partner in the process or it will happen in a more unpredictable arena and in a manner over which we have little influence, a nation is an organism; it grows, it evolves, it changes, it adapts and like other organisms if it does not adapt, it dies. As long as the federal government remains overly dominant relative to the federating States, it will continue no matter which section of the country captures federal power with its attendant instability. As long as a federal government keeps the bulk of oil revenues for itself, its desire and will provide the leadership need to diversify the economy will continue to be limited. (*Sunday SUN* July 13, 2016).

The wisdom in the call of this statesman can hardly be faulted. First, he strongly canvasses for a responsible and responsive approach to the solution of the intractable problems that face the country. Thus he lays down irrefutable logic why the conference table, with the participation of all stakeholders is a necessity. Second, he throws a compelling challenge to the national leaders to grow, change and adapt. Failure to adapt is an invitation of anarchy and death. Finally, he emphasized how unacceptable and untenable the current situation is for us as a people. However, it has become attitudinal anomaly of most state actors to sing a different song when they are out of office. Such position would have made more impact if Atiku has proposed the nation restructuring when he was Vice President. But unfortunately when the question of resource control was advocated the government he served under paid a deaf-ear and as vice president he did not say anything contrary. The unitary style of central administration bequeathed to us by nearly four decades of military rule, is not suitable to the current temper of the nation.

Conclusion

Nigeria has faced grave challenges that have threatened her cooperate existence, both in the past and in the present. As daunting as these issues may have been, they are merely raw challenges to the leadership and management abilities of the nation's leaders. Basic conflict management techniques requires that in the face of differing challenges, the political and social managers of the nation should select from a portfolio of styles the ones that are most suited to the nation's needs. But above everything else, there must be the will and the will to do justice to all manner of men without fear, favour or ill-will. The Nigerian

federal and State political leaders must rise to the challenge of the moment to provide focused leadership. The State needs to put in place an elaborate and sustainable structural framework that shows genuine interest in peace-building within the polity. The state actors must guarantee equal participation of all sections of the country in the socio-economic activities within their domain through legislation. The restructuring of the Nigerian State is a viable option for conflict management and sustainable peace-building process that will guarantee economic and political freedom of the minorities and the marginalized within the sovereign State and enhance even development of all sections of the country.

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